

02-277

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED 05/20/03

217 Moore Ave.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13210-3535

ORIGINAL

Chairman Michael Powell and
Commissioners of the F.C.C.
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, I offer the following remarks for Your consideration and respectfully request it be made part of the record. Thank You.

THE NEED FOR GREED SHOULD NOT
S U C C E E D !!!!!

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, after several years of free lancing news film to the ABC, CBS and NBC affiliates in Syracuse, N.Y. I joined the ABC staff of Channel 9 on 07/7/70. it was an experience and thrill of a lifetime, it was a time span that was filled with highs and lows, times of privelege and pleasure.

I would devote the next 24 years to my job, 24X7, my job came before my family and all else, I use to go to work hoping it was a 12 or 16 hour day plus Saturdays.

We had the benefit of free coffee at our Station and so much of my worktime was at time and a half or double time that as I took on the responsibility of making sure the coffee pot was full, I dubbed myself the most expensive coffee maker in town.

I take great pride in the fact for 24 years when I promised someone, my source would

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never be revealed, it wasn't and if my station did not have the courage or desire to air the story, i would ship it elsewhere. There were many 16-18 hour days, not all this was on the clock, you have to learn to learn, so many time you gave of your time freely so you could get the story ahead of your competitors.

I started smokeing Kools in 1950 and by the time I started at Ch.9 it was a 2 pack day. on May 17, 1994, while working the 9-6 shift I left work an hour early, I did not feel well, the following day I went to my health care provider, after a series of X-rays I then underwent some pulmonary tests, upon the completion of these tests, it was determined that I had lost 76% of my lung capacity. my days at channel 9 were done.

The monetary loss was very extreme, by the Grace of God, my employer offered me the prievelege of continuing my term life insurance by paying what they paid for each employee.

I was pre-paid through 7/31/02 when I found out in May of 2002 that Clear Chans. was purchasing Ch.9 in Syracuse, so hopefully to continue a practice that had existed for 8 years. on 6/5/02 I gave WIXT-TV an advanced payment to cover 8/1/02-7/31/03. the check was accepted by the company and held on to for a couple of weeks before being deposited. it was placed into Ch.9 acct after Clear Channels assumed ownership.

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When I went to the Union Clambake that Summer, the big question was, did the company accept my check, the answer was a very positive YES!! I believed I was safe for at least another year everyone appeared happy for me.

On January 30, 2003 at approximately 8:42 A.M. I got a phone call from the employee benefits dept. of Ch.9, the message was that as of 1/1/03 my term life ins. policy had expired, I now offer this for the Commission to consider, this was 30 DAYS AFTER THE FACT!!!, I could of died not even realizing I was not covered, Clear Channels has never formally notified me of this fact, I believe there is a law that requires prior notification of an insurance suspension, is Clear Channels SO BIG that they are ABOVE THE LAW As of this date I do not have one penny of insurance to bury my remains, but Clear Channels have my funds in their Ch.9 acct. The only clarification I would like to make is that the present Vice Pres. & Gen. Mgr., Theresa Underwood, at the time of my leaving was in the Sales Dept and had no knowledge of my situation of my agreement. Since becoming aware of it, she has done everything possible to attempt to be of assistance to me, for this I am most grateful If I might re-visit my subject title, THE NEED FOR GREED SHOULD NOT SUCCEED Clear Channels position is they do not provide term life insurance for retired employees.

Someone told me several months ago that Clear Channels posted a record earnings in February of 2003, if this is fact and they are as big as they are, why not combine their greed with some compassion, if a former employee is willing to pay up front the equal cost of what the company pays for an employee, with the only difference being some possible additional paperwork, which is probably a tax deductible item, Mr. Chairman, You and possibly two other Commissioners are ready supposedly to grant these GREEDY, SELF SERVING people at Clear Channels the rest of the pot at the end of the rainbow, SHAME ON YOU!!!

On the evening news last week, some town, the location, i am not sure of suffered some type of an environmental exposure, allegedly there are 7 radio stations in the town, 6 of them are owned by Clear Channels I caught part of the story, I believe it was the Police Chief who stated words to the effect, that I have always told the towns people that if any type of a disaster occurs turn on your radio for guidance. Clear Channels radio stations I believe are computer generated, the company refused an on camera interview but released a statement that went something like this, our primary responsibility is to our sponsors instead of making public service announcements.

Are these people at Clear Channels for real do they really want to truly be a part of the The American Way Of Life ???

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, we are blessed in this Nation to have the right of freedom of expression which I believe I have used, it is not unusual for me to raise the bar a step higher, so here it goes.

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully submit for Your consideration, if You are a FRACTION of the Man, YOUR FATHER IS and You have a MINUTE DECIMAL POINT OF HIS COURAGE PLEASE DEFEAT THE CURRENT PROPOSAL TO RELAX CURRENT FCC LAWS Clear Channels has not shown itself worthy of wiping out competition.

Sincerely,



Bill Button

PHONE - 315-422-2009

cc's U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
Congressman James T. Walsh
N.Y. Senator Nancy Larraine Hoffman
Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli
Local Nabet 211/CWA
National Nabet and CWA Offices
Bill O'Reilly at Fox News

enclosure 1

PAGE E-2 THE POST-STANDARD Saturday, March 15, 2003

CNY

TV & Radio

Parade minus one leprechaun this year

WILLIAM LARUE

TELEVISION WRITER



Dressing as a leprechaun for the St. Patrick's Parade in Syracuse was so much fun for Bill Button that he continued doing so year after year, even after he became disabled in 1994 because of respiratory prob-

lems.

"Here I am with 24 percent (capacity) of my lungs, out in the freezing cold," Button recalls. "I've got a puffer in my hand. I'd slip a bit on it now and then. I had oxygen in the car when I got done."

But today, for the first time in 15 years, Button won't put on his costume and sit on a Channel 9 vehicle as the parade rolls down Salina Street. He's upset at his former employer, WIXT-TV, where he worked as a cameraman from 1970 until he became disabled.

Button, 70, of Syracuse, says WIXT's new owner, Clear Channel Communications, dropped him from the station's life insurance coverage, effective at the end of 2002. He says he has paid \$83.64 a year to participate in the plan since leaving WIXT.

To continue the same policy now with its \$34,000 death benefit, Button says, he was told he would have to pay \$2,863 a year.

"It breaks my heart (to boycott the parade). I really enjoyed doing it," he says.



Dick Blume / Staff photographer

BILL BUTTON, a former cameraman at WIXT-TV, won't be marching as a leprechaun in the St. Patrick's Parade in Syracuse today because of an insurance dispute with the TV station.

"But I would be a hypocrite to get on their vehicle."

Theresa Underwood, general manager at WIXT, says she's surprised Button is making a public fuss.

The station's former owner, The Ackerley Group, "gratuitously" provided him insurance coverage after he left the station. Underwood says. But Clear Channel's insurance policy doesn't cover retirees, she says.

"Bill was an invaluable employee for many, many, many years," she says. "When he retired, he went out on a real positive note, and people were very fond of him. Which is why, when he asked to continue to participate in the parade, we let him. Again, that's a little bit unusual, too. But he was an intrinsic part of the fabric here."

Some of Button's favorite memories at WIXT involve the famous people he covered on assignment, such as former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo. Button says the governor called him "Brother Bill."

Even after retiring from WIXT, Button made a point of seeking out celebrity visitors. One of his favorite souvenirs is an autographed photo of him shaking hands with U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y.

"Poor lady extended her hand to me," Button says, laughing. "It was one of the biggest mistakes of her life, as I gently clasped her hand and didn't let it go until I told her everything I had to say."

Button again is proving he holds on when he wants something. Even if it means giving up something else he loved doing for 15 years.

WIXT shows parade

Today's St. Patrick's Parade airs live on Channel 9 from noon to 3 p.m. WIXT rebroadcasts its parade coverage at 11:35 p.m. today.

This marks the 19th year that Channel 9 has broadcast the parade live. WIXT co-anchors Dan Cummings and Julie Abbott provide commentary, with reporting by Channel 9's Mike Price and Tim Fox. Jeffrey Mercer produces the parade broadcast, and Laura Bailey directs it.

Staff writer William Larue's "TV & Radio" column appears Saturdays and Mondays.



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